

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANTIA 01328 191417Z

44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 L-03 OMB-01

TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /117 W

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R 181341Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7827

INFO SECDEF

JCS

DA

USCINCSO

USARSO

S E C R E T SANTIAGO 1328

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, CI

SUBJECT: TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILE

A. SANTIAGO 1325

1. SUMMARY: MESSAGE EXPLAINS IMPORTANCE MISSION ATTACHES TO EARLIEST PRACTICABLE ACTION TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO CHILEAN REQUEST FOR TOW WEAPONS.

2. RECENT APPROACH TO MILGRP OFFICER (SEE REFTTEL) PROMPTS US TO EXPRESS THE GROWING CONCERN WITHIN THE MISSION THAT OUR FAILURE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO CHILEAN REQUESTS FOR TOW MISSILES MAY BE ESPECIALLY UNFORTUNATE. WE APPRECIATE DELICACY INVOLVED IN ANY ACTION WHICH RELEASES ARMS FOR CHILE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE STRONG CASE CAN BE MADE FOR FAVORABLE PRIORITY TREATMENT FOR TOWS, AND THAT APPROVAL WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS.

3. WHILE TOW HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS A "SOPHISTICATED WEAPON," WE BELIEVE THIS CLASSIFICATION IS INTENDED FOR MORE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SANTIA 01328 191417Z

COMPLEX WEAPONS THAN THE TOW. THE MANUFACTURER INSISTS THAT

ANYONE WITH NORMAL COORDINATION CAN BE TRAINED TO USE THIS WEAPON EFFECTIVELY IN FOUR HOURS. THE MISSILE ITSELF IS A COMPLETE COMPONENT AND REQUIRES NO MAINTENANCE OR ADJUSTMENT. THE LAUNCHER IS ALSO VERY SIMPLE, REQUIRES NO MAINTENANCE BEYOND CLEANING, AND HAS MOSTLY SEALED COMPONENTS WHICH MUST BE REPLACED AS UNITS RATHER THAN REPAIRED.

4. ADDITIONALLY, THIS WEAPON SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A DEFENSIVE WEAPON, LIKE THE 3.5 ROCKET LAUNCHER AND THE 106MM ANTI-TANK RECOILESS RIFLE WHICH CHILE ALREADY HAS. THW TOW COULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED AS A POTENTIAL TRADE-OFF AGAINST CHILE'S PURCHASING LARGE NUMBERS OF MEDIUM TANKS AND WOULD OFFER DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY AT FAR LOWER COST.

5. TOW IS CURRENTLY THE HOTTEST ITEM ON THE CHILEAN ARMY'S PROCUREMENT LIST AND IS RECEIVING ATTENTION FROM GENERAL PINOCHET AND THE MOD.

6. LASTLY, A SIMILAR WEAPON HAS ALREADY BEEN PURCHASED BY PERU FROM WEST GERMANY. PERU PURCHASED 700 COBRA ANTI-TANK MISSILES IN 1970-1971.

7. THIS MISSION, IN SANTIAGO 5754 OF 29 DEC 72, RECOMMENDED A MIX OF TANKS AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS SYSTEMS AS ADDED INSURANCE AGAINST PERCEIVED ARMOR THREAT FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. IN VIEW OF ABOVE WE FEEL THE TOW SHOULD BE ONE OF THE PRIORITY WEAPONS APPROVED FOR SALE TO CHILE AT VERY EARLY DATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MISSILES, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES), MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANTIA01328
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740335/aaaabgtj.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <03 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILE A. SANTIAGO 1325
TAGS: MASS, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005